



What Homeowners Should Know About Upcoming Changes to Furnace Standards in Canada

The Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada (HRAI) and Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) want homeowners to be aware of a new national minimum energy performance standard for gas furnaces that will go into effect on January 1, 2010. As of that date, gas furnaces manufactured for most residential applications must have a minimum fuel efficiency level of 90%. These furnaces achieve this level of efficiency through high efficiency “condensing technology” where the products of combustion are exhausted from the living area by a plastic vent pipe commonly routed through a side wall.

The implementation of this standard is part of Canada’s ongoing efforts to address climate change and improve the environment. High efficiency condensing furnaces (minimum 90% efficient) are also cost-effective for homeowners in that fuel consumption will be reduced by about 12% when compared to furnaces at the current minimum standard (78% efficient). The dollar savings will depend on the size and construction of the home. In addition to these savings, the furnace installation may be eligible for an ecoEnergy Retrofit grant from the federal government and complementary provincial grants in some parts of the country. Additional financial assistance may be available through the Home Renovation Tax Credit.

If a high efficiency gas furnace is being installed in your home for the first time, it will typically require changes to the home’s venting system and in some cases, the venting of the hot water heater. Depending on the home, the additional costs should be offset by future fuel cost savings from the new furnace. Where through-wall venting is more complex (e.g., narrow, attached houses with front and rear obstructions, closely spaced doorways and large windows or full-width porches and/or decks), the changes to the venting system may be more expensive.

Homeowners should also be aware that gas furnaces manufactured before January 1, 2010 with efficiencies of less than 90% can still be sold after January 1, 2010. If you are considering replacing your furnace, we recommend that you contact a licensed heating, ventilating and airconditioning (HVAC) contractor who will assess your specific situation and recommend solutions for your home. A listing of qualified contractors can be found on www.hrai.ca.

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